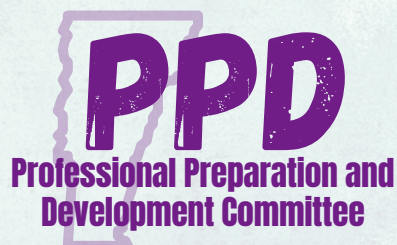




Professional Development Recommendations 2025-2028



Why Professional Preparation and Development?

Professional preparation and ongoing professional development is essential to providing high-quality early childhood and afterschool learning experiences. Professional preparation, also referred to as "preservice", refers to education and training a person engages in prior to beginning a position in the early childhood or afterschool workforce. Ongoing professional development or "in-service" refers to the education and training a person engages in to enhance their skills and knowledge related to their practice as a member of the early childhood or afterschool field.¹

Professional development is a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early childhood and afterschool professionals.²

Effective Professional Development

Effective professional development can be defined as "structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes." Based on an extensive literature review, the Learning Policy Institute identified seven features of effective professional development.

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- IS CONTENT FOCUSED
- INCORPORATES ACTIVE LEARNING
- SUPPORTS COLLABORATION
- USES MODELS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
- PROVIDES COACHING AND EXPERT SUPPORT
- OFFERS FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION
- IS OF SUSTAINED DURATION



References:

1. Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary (2011) Retrieved from: https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/glossarytraining_ta.pdf
2. Retrieved from: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pd>
3. Effective Teacher Professional Development (2017) Retrieved from: https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf

Creating Effective Professional Development

This document provides recommendations from the Building Bright Futures Professional Preparation and Development (BBF PPD) Committee about professional development opportunities in 2025-2028. The BBF PPD Committee encourages all organizations and groups who provide professional development to early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont to use these recommendations to inform their decisions.

FOCUS ON CONTENT

Use research-based or research-informed content. Actively link content to the Vermont Early Learning Standards. Highlight the value of linking pedagogy to practice. Prioritize implementation of developmentally appropriate practice. Focus on the importance of play.

INCORPORATE ACTIVE LEARNING

Use adult learning principles to engage participants directly in designing and trying out teaching strategies. Use interactive activities and leverage participants' existing knowledge to provide highly contextualized learning.

SUPPORT COLLABORATION

Create space for participants to share ideas and collaborate in their learning. Embed strategies like communities of practice to facilitate collective learning. Think carefully about the needs of your audience so participants can engage effectively. Consider the time, location, cost, modality, and individual learning needs of participants.

USE MODELS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Embed examples of high quality curriculum and instruction into learning opportunities. Include sample student work, observations of peers, and video or written reflections.

PROVIDE COACHING AND EXPERT SUPPORT

Coaching, mentoring, and communities of practice offer a chance to practice new skills so participants can improve their practice. Embedding these wherever possible improves the value of the learning experience. Explore methods like Practice-Based Coaching.

Consider consulting with professionals in your community as instructors or special guests for professional development opportunities. These may include early childhood mental health clinicians, Strong Families Vermont professionals and more.

OFFER FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION

Ensure opportunities provide space for regular reflection. Create opportunities for participants to receive feedback on their work with an eye toward improving practice.

OFFER OPPORTUNITIES OF SUSTAINED DURATION

Educators are more likely to embed their learning into practice when they have adequate time to practice and embed the learning. Think about how you can scaffold content and prioritize training series' or communities of practice to promote change in practice.

Unified Core Knowledge Areas

Professionals working in early childhood and afterschool settings in Vermont use different sets of professional standards to guide their work. Northern Lights at CCV used the core knowledge areas and standards outlined in these professional standards documents to establish Vermont's Unified Core Knowledge Areas.

1 Child Development and Learning

2 Family and Community Partnerships

3 Developmentally Appropriate and Inclusive Practices

4 Curriculum and Learning Environments

5 Observation and Assessment

6 Professionalism and Ethical Practice

7 Youth Engagement, Voice, and Choice

8 Safety and Wellness

9 Program Planning and Development

Core knowledge areas 7, 8, and 9 are included in the professional standards for afterschool professionals. These knowledge areas are not included in the early childhood standards referenced above.

Linking Professional Standards to Learning Standards



In Vermont, the learning standards for children birth through age 8 are the Vermont Early Learning Standards. These standards are relevant in all early education and a majority of regulated afterschool settings.

VELS I: DEVELOPING SELF

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Learning and Development
- Growing, Moving, and Being Healthy

VELS II: COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION

- Language Development
- Literacy Development
- Creative Arts and Expression

VELS III: LEARNING ABOUT THE WORLD

- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

Training Levels

- **Introductory: Building Knowledge and Skills**
 - Provides an overview or basic understanding of the topic
 - Content is appropriate for individuals with no prior knowledge of this topic
- **Intermediate: Expanding Knowledge and Practicing Skills**
 - Provides opportunities to expand knowledge and to practice skills
 - Content is appropriate for individuals who already hold a basic understanding of the topic
- **Advanced: Applying Knowledge and Skills**
 - Provides opportunities to apply knowledge and skills and to engage deeply with a topic
 - Content is appropriate for individuals who already hold strong knowledge of the topic

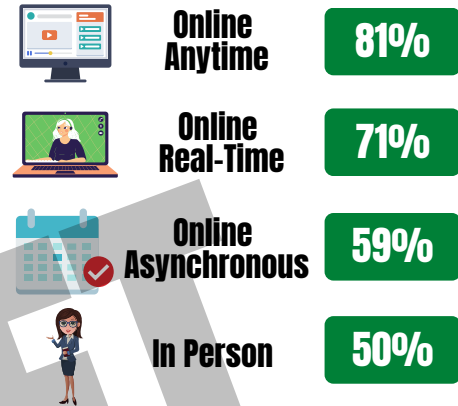
Key Professional Development Needs 2024

Each year, Northern Lights at CCV surveys members of the early childhood and afterschool workforce to better understand their professional development needs and preferences. See below for key highlights from the 2024 data set:

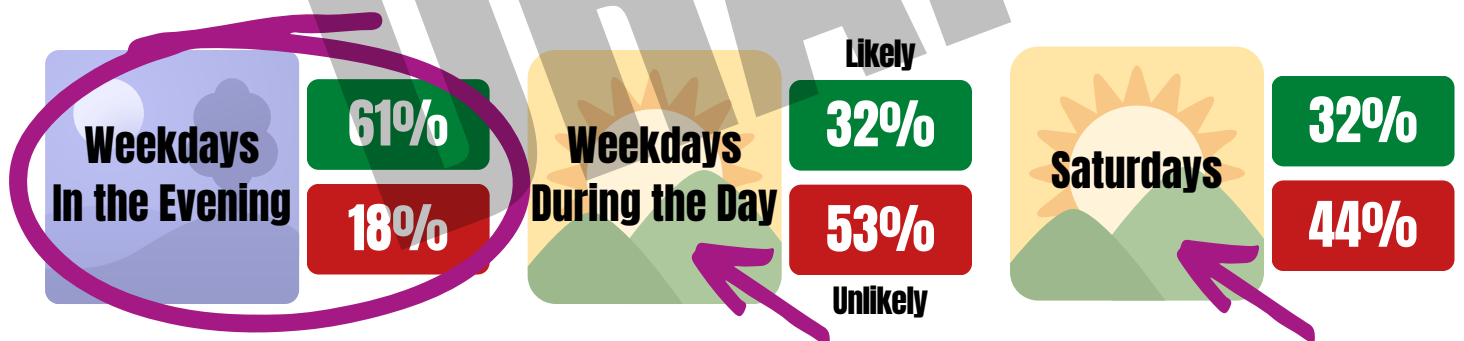
Top Three Training Topics Requested:



The Field is Seeking Multiple Ways to Access Training:



Folks are more likely to attend trainings on weekday evenings...



...but a strong minority are interested in weekdays during the day and Saturdays.

How folks find training opportunities:

Frequently Mentioned in Open Response:

Direct Messages from Trainers and Organizations

74% I search the Northern Lights Training Calendar

46% I hear about trainings from my Vermont Early Childhood Network

Visit the Northern Lights website for additional data! <https://northernlightscv.org/>

Content Recommendations for 2025-2028

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The BBF PPD Committee recommends professional development opportunities are available at multiple levels (introductory, intermediate, and advanced) and in multiple content areas:

1 Child Development and Learning

- Five Domains of Child Development
- Social and Emotional Learning and Development
- Pyramid Model and Early Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- Trauma Informed Practices

2 Family and Community Partnerships

- Strengthening Families Framework and STRONG
- Trainings that meet Advanced Specialized Care Criteria
- Supporting Families Impacted by Substance Use Disorders

3 Developmentally Appropriate and Inclusive Practices

- Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- Strategies for Support and Inclusion of Every Child
- Differentiated Instruction
- Responding to Challenging Behaviors

4 Curriculum and Learning Environments

- Using and Embedding the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)
- Curriculum and Environments for Infants/Toddlers
- Curriculum and Environments for Multi-Age Groups
- Universal Design for Learning

5 Observation and Assessment

- Conducting Child Observations
- Developmental Screening Tools (e.g. ASQ-3, ASQ-SE)
- Teaching Strategies GOLD
- Program and Classroom Assessments (e.g. CLASS, YPQA)

6 Professionalism and Ethical Practice

- Professionalism and Ethics
- Reflective Practice
- Leadership
- Advocacy
- Effective Communication with Families and Colleagues

7 Youth Engagement, Voice, and Choice

- Creating and Implementing Student-Led Programming
- Practical Strategies to Gather Child/Student Feedback

8 Safety and Wellness

- First Aid and CPR
- Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Water Safety

9 Program Planning and Development

- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Child Care Business Startup, Sustainability, and Transition Planning
- Staff Supervision and Support

Types of Standards



Program Standards

Program Standards are requirements early childhood or afterschool programs must meet that help create environments where children are more likely to learn. They include standards like group size, staff-child ratios, and educator qualifications.



Professional Standards

Professional Standards are the essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices required of professionals working with children birth through age 8 in early learning settings.



Learning Standards

Learning Standards are the knowledge, skills, and dispositions children gain through quality early childhood experiences, across all early learning and afterschool settings.

Standards Frequently Used in Vermont

PROGRAM STANDARDS

- Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations.
- Head Start Program Performance Standards.
- Vermont Education Quality Standards.
- Individuals with Disabilities Act, Part B and Part C.
- Vermont Prekindergarten Education Rules.
- STep Ahead Recognition System (STARS) Standards.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators.
- Core Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals.
- Early Interventionist / Early Childhood Special Educator Standards.
- Under Development: Agency of Education Early Childhood Education Competencies

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.
- Vermont Early Learning Standards.

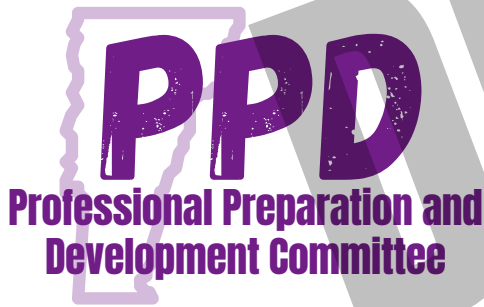
About This Document

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This document provides recommendations from the Building Bright Futures Professional Preparation and Development (BBF PPD) Committee about professional development opportunities in 2025-2028. The BBF PPD Committee encourages all organizations and groups who provide professional development to early childhood and afterschool professionals in Vermont to use these recommendations to inform their decisions.

Draft recommendations were created in 2025 based on national recommendations and Vermont-specific data and reports and were reviewed and vetted by stakeholders in INSERT. Stakeholder feedback was reviewed by members of the BBF PPD Committee and incorporated into the final recommendations.

All BBF PPD Committee meetings are open to the public. For more information about upcoming meetings and past documents and meeting notes, visit: <https://northernlightscv.org/resources/vermonts-ecpd-system/ppd/>



MISSION

Created July, 2005
Revised March 2012

The mission of the Building Bright Futures Professional Preparation and Development Committee is to develop, coordinate, and promote a comprehensive system of quality learning opportunities for current and prospective early childhood and afterschool professionals.

The BBF PPD Committee

- Aligns professional development initiatives into a coordinated system
- Advocates for resources and improvements to the system
- Uses the Guiding Principles for Vermont's Early Childhood Professional Development System (ECPDS) to guide operations

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vermont's professional development system for the early childhood and afterschool workforce is:

1. Clear and known
2. Supportive of professional growth
3. Research-based and relevant
4. Integrated and aligned
5. Accessible
6. Financially supported
7. Evaluated on all of the above criteria